

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 01868 241241Z

65

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 SCCT-01 CU-02 TRSE-00

OPIC-03 OMB-01 /081 W

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R 202118Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3582

INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

AMCONSUL CALI

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EO: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINT EAIR CO

SUBJ: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION AND LABOR AGITATION INCREASED. THE CONVERGENCE OF THESE MOSTLY UNRELATED INCIDENTS, IS REPORTEDLY OF GROWING CONCERN TO THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION. THE GOC'S INVESTIGATION OF LOCKHEED BRIBERY CHARGES MAY BOG DOWN UNLESS DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED FROM THE U.S. SENATE IS RECEIVED PROMPTLY. THE SECRETARY'S LATIN AMERICAN VISIT RECEIVED LIMITED BUT FAVORABLE MEDIA COVERAGE. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY. THE PROBABLY KIDNAPPING OF CTC PRESIDENT JOSE MERCADO, MISSING SINCE FEB. 15 (BOGOTA 1788), HIGHLIGHTED A WEEK OF UNREST AND LABOR AGITATION SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. MERCADO MAY HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY M-19, AN EXTREMIST GROUP ASSOCIATED WITH THE ANAPO POLITICAL PARTY, WHICH CLAIMS TO BE HOLDING HIM FOR A "PEOPLE'S TRIAL". ON FEB. 16 THE FRENCH NATIONAL MANAGER OF THE RENAULT ASSEMBLY PLANT IN MEDELLIN WAS WOUNDED IN A MACHINE GUN ATTACK ON HIS VEHICLE. A FORMER MILITARY JUDGE WAS

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PAGE 02 BOGOTA 01868 241241Z

MURDERED IN CALI ON FEB. 17. TROOPS PATROLLED THE STREETS OF

MEDELLIN, WHICH REMAINED CALM FOLLOWING VIOLENT CLASHES BETWEEN POLICE AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON FEB 13. SEVERAL STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED AND SENTENCED TO SHORT PRISON TERMS BY A MILITARY COURT. THE VIOLENCE, WHICH FOLLOWED WEEKS OF STUDENT UNREST, WAS TOUCHED OFF APPARENTLY BY THE SUICIDE OF A STUDENT ON THE PREMISES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MEDELLIN. SEVERAL SMALL TOWNS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY CALLED CIVIC STRIKES TO PROTEST A LACK OF PUBLIC SERVICES.

3. LABOR UNREST. A WAVE OF LABOR AGITATION, ALTHOUGH NORMAL AT THIS TIME OF YEAR SINCE MANY LABOR CONTRACTS EXPIRE IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY, IS CAUSING CONCERN TO THE GOC. THE DISPUTES AFFECT PRIMARILY GOVERNMENT AND SEMI-PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS THE FINANCE MINISTRY, PORTS AND SOME BANKS. THE TEACHERS WILL SOON JOIN IN. IN ADDITION TO THE CLIMATE OF UNREST WHICH THESE AGITATIONS HELP TO GENERATE, GOC CONCERN IS BASED ON THE NEED TO HOLD SALARY INCREASES TO A MINIMUM IN ORDER TO CONSERVE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS THE REVENUES GAINED FROM THE 1974 TAX REFORM. PRESIDENT LOPEZ, IN A SPEECH ANNOUNCED FOR FEB. 20, WILL PROBABLY ADDRESS THE LABOR SITUATION, AS WELL AS INTERNAL SECURITY.

4. LOCKHEED INVESTIGATION. GOC INVESTIGATIONS OF LOCKHEED BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS CONTINUED. THE PACE OF THESE INVESTIGATIONS, HOWEVER, MAY SLOW IF THE DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED BY BOTH THE COLOMBIAN EXECUTIVE AND SENATE FROM THE U.S. SENATE IS NOT RECEIVED SOON. THE SENATE PLANS TO UNDERTAKE ITS OWN INVESTIGATION. MEANWHILE, LOCKHEED HAS BEEN PUT ON NOTICE THAT THE GOC WILL MAKE NO FURTHER PURCHASES FROM LOCKHEED UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE COMPANY ITSELF PROVIDES THE NAMES OF ALL COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS ALLEGED TO HAVE ACCEPTED BRIBES.

5. PRESS REACTION TO KISSINGER VISIT. THE COLOMBIAN NEWS MEDIA HAVE GIVEN LIMITED, GENERALLY FAVORABLE COVERAGE TO THE SECRETARY'S LATIN AMERICAN VISIT. EDITORIAL COVERAGE, ALSO LIMITED, HAS FOR THE MOST PART BEEN FAVORABLE, DESCRIBING THE TRIP AS EVIDENCE OF THE SECRETARY'S CONTINUING INTEREST IN LATIN AMERICA.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NATIONAL SECURITY, POLITICAL SITUATION, CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BOGOTA01868
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760069-0483
From: BOGOTA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760232/aaaabbbj.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <14 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE WEEK IN COLOMBIA
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, EAIR, CO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006